

CD 2003--42/43

Saturday, March 1, 2003
8 pm. Walter Hall

Faculty of Music
Presents

University of Toronto Chamber Ensemble

PROGRAMME

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Five Pieces for Strings, Op. 44, No. 4

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

Suite for Strings

I. Moderato

II. Adagio

III. Andante

IV. Presto

V. Adagio

VI. Andante

Raffi Armenian, *conductor*

INTERMISSION

Steve Reich
(1936)

Tehillim

Part I: Psalm 19:2-5

Part II: Psalm 34:13-15

Part III: Psalm 18:26-27

Part IV: Psalm 150:4-6

Adine Mintz, *conductor*



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Programme Notes

Five Pieces Op. 44 No. 4

PAUL HINDEMITH

Born in Hanau, Germany, in 1895

Died in Frankfurt, in 1963

As a child, Paul Hindemith studied the violin, and with his musical siblings was a member of the Frankfurt Children's Trio – an ensemble concocted as a money-making scheme by his ne'er-do-well father. By 1914 he had graduated to the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, where he served as concertmaster until he was called up for military duty in 1917. Even in the trenches of France he managed to organize a string quartet.

Following the war, he returned to the life of a professional musician, but came to think of himself as a composer first and foremost. Working prolifically, Hindemith initially wrote in a variety of styles – everything from Brahms to early Schoenberg – but by 1920 he had firmly allied himself with the anti-Romantic “New Objectivity” movement, cultivating a lean, contrapuntal style that freely mixed consonance with dissonance. In 1923, he joined the organizing committee of the Donaueschingen Music Festival, helping to make it a leading centre for new music.

His *Five Pieces in First Position for Advanced Players* were published in 1927 – in the year that he became an instructor at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. In this meaty little work, Hindemith's experiences as a violinist and his involvement in music education came together, as it is written with the technical limitations of student musicians in mind. “First position” refers to the basic hand-position for a string player, which allows a violinist, for example, to play notes only in a range limited to just over two octaves: for higher notes, more advanced hand-positions are required. As a result of Hindemith's care in this regard, the tessitura of these pieces

is rather low, and high notes are altogether absent.

However, this suite is clearly not intended for beginners, demanding precise intonation and balance from any ensemble that would play it. The first movement is brooding and dissonant; the second, however is triadically based, with contrapuntal inner voices supporting the main melody in a way that recalls Handel. The third movement is quite busy, with surprisingly thin textures: for many measures, only the first violins and violas play. The fourth piece features stately dotted rhythms; and the fifth movement contains a solo violin part – a sort of miniature, modernist Vivaldi concerto.

Suite for Strings

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

Born in Hukvaldi, Moravia, in 1854

Died in Moravská Ostrava,

Czechoslovakia, in 1928

By 1877 the young Leoš Janáček was a busy musician in the Moravian city of Brno. He had not yet completed his professional training, but already he conducted two choirs, introducing large-scale works such as Mozart's Requiem into the local repertoire. As well, he ambitiously included orchestral works on his programmes, and even served as a piano soloist in concertos.

His *Suite for Strings* – his earliest extant orchestral work – dates from this year and was premiered in December under the baton of the conductor, receiving favourable comment from a Brno newspaper. The work, in six short movements, displays the influence of a variety of Romantic composers – possibly even Wagner. But by far the strongest influence was Dvořák, whom Janáček met in the summer of 1877. The two men spent several days travelling throughout

Bohemia together, and Janáček found himself very much "in tune" with the composer thirteen years his senior. "You know how it is when someone takes the words out of your mouth?" wrote Janáček, recalling the meeting. "For me it was always like that in the company of Dvořák."

The first movement of the *Suite* begins energetically, threatening to become a march at times, only to end in a surprisingly tranquil gesture. The second movement is a sweet-sounding adagio, played by the muted violins and violas only; and the third is an elegant gavotte-like dance. The fourth movement begins with a dramatic intensity that gives way to a lyrical andante, returning only briefly to the opening material. The fifth piece is another adagio – this time beginning with the lower strings omitted from the second movement – containing a tiny, melancholy cello solo. The finale recalls the spirit of the first movement in many respects, building to a climax of violin tremolos and ending with a brief chorale-like section.

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Tehillim

STEVE REICH

Born in New York, United States, 1936

Steve Reich began composing in 1965 and is best known for his invention of "phasing," a system of composition where short rhythms or melodies are repeated and then the ideas are gradually displaced in time. Steve Reich became interested in his Jewish heritage and by 1981 felt a need to incorporate Judaism into his music. In *Tehillim* (Hebrew for Psalms), he sets to music Psalms that would speak to both Jews and non-Jews. It is a four-part work for four female voices, percussion, keyboards, winds and strings.

Each part is based on a different Psalm text. These texts make up a code for living. The first part revels in the wonders of G-d's creation. The text reminds us that even if

we do not look, the marvels of creation will always be there. The second part tells us to love life and how to live a good life. We must "turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." The third part tells us that G-d will deal with us as we have dealt with our fellow human beings. The final part is "Hallelujah", praise G-d with song and dance and drums and winds.

The essence of the piece is the constant rhythms in the percussion parts. The rhythm and melody are derived from the text. The winds and keyboards double the vocal melodies and the strings add harmonic depth. The pulse constantly changes between two and three beats, giving the piece its powerful rhythmic drive.

Part I starts with a single voice and tuned drum. Other instruments are added building to the most complex section, a close 4-part canon by the singers and keyboards. After the canon, the texture simplifies until left with a single voice like the beginning.

Part II is an "attaca" movement (no break after Part I). This movement presents the original melody and then augments it. The rhythm and melody are stretched out, and a beautiful descant is added in the third voice.

Part III is the only slow movement (created at the request of the conductor who premiered the first 2 parts pleading that the musicians needed a break). The text is a question-and-answer idea with the singers divided into pairs. To soften the timbre, the rhythmic ideas are played on marimba and vibraphone.

Part IV, another "attaca" movement, recapitulates the other movements. The melody is introduced in harmony which moves into a 2-part and then a 4-part canon. The end of the canon goes straight into an augmentation of the melody with added descant. Finally, all the instruments join in as the word "Hallelujah" is sung as a question-and-answer in "joyous D major".

—Adine Mintz

PART I: PSALM 19:2-5

Hashamyim mehsapehrim kavodh Kail,
Umahahsay yadave mahgid harakiah.

Yom leyom yabeeah ohmer,
Valyla lelyla yechahvey daaht.
Ain ohmer vaain dehvarim,
Behli nishmah kolahm.
Behkol haahretz yatzah kavahm,
Uviktzeh tehvail melayhem.

PART II: PSALM 34:13-15

Mi haish hehchahfehtz chahyim,
Ohhehve yahmim lirote tov.
Nehtzor leshonchah mehrah,
Uusfahtehchah midahbehr mirmah.
Sur mehrah vaahsehtov,
Bakehsh shalom vehradfehu.

PART III: PSALM 18:26-27

Im chasid titchahsahd,
Im gehvar tamin titamam.

Im navar titbahrar,
Vaim eekehsh titpahtal.

PART IV: PSALM 150:4-6

Halleluhu batof umachol
Halleluhu baminim vaugav
Halleluhu batziltzleh shamah
Halleluhu batziltzleh taruah
Kol hanshama tehhail Yah
Halleluyah

The heavens recount the honour of G-d
The arch of the sky reveals G-d's
handiwork

Day after day the word pours out
Night after night knowledge goes forth
There is no speech, there are no words
No voice is heard
Yet their call goes through all the earth
And their words to the edge of the
universe!

Who among you loves life,
And longs to enjoy good for many days?
Then keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from deceitful speech.
Turn away from evil and do good,
Seek peace and pursue it.

If righteous, G-d treats them righteously
If almost perfect, G-d treats them almost
perfectly
If upright, G-d treats them uprightly
But with the perverse, G-d is subtle.

Praise G-d with drums and winds
Praise G-d with strings and dance
Praise G-d with cymbal sounding
Praise G-d with cymbal resounding
All the souls will praise G-d
Halleluyah!

Biographies

In 1962, twenty-year old **Raffi Armenian** graduated from the piano performance class of Bruno Seidlhofer at the Academy of Music, Vienna, Austria. In 1965, he graduated from Imperial College, University of London, England in Metallurgy. Going back to music and Vienna, he completed studies at the Vienna Academy of Music in Orchestral Conducting (Hans Swarowsky 1968), Choral Conducting (Rheinhold Schmid 1969) and Composition (Alfred Uhl

1969). Further, he took private voice lessons with Ferdinand Grossmann.

In 1969, he emigrated to Canada, where he became Artistic Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (1971-1993). The Raffi Armenian Theatre in Kitchener, which he helped to design, is considered one of the best performance spaces in North America, for both its acoustics and its design features. In 1974, he founded the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which achieved International

recognition with tours in North and South America, and Europe.

Raffi Armenian has guest conducted of the major orchestras in Canada, as well as in Belgium, Italy, the USA, and the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra. Equally at home on the operatic podium, he has performances in Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Columbus (Ohio) and Indiana, in a vast repertoire, including several works of the Twentieth Century such as *Wozzeck* and *The Rake's Progress*. From 1982 to 1985, he was Artistic Director of the Opera Studio of Opera de Montreal. In 1989, he conducted the final public appearance of the great Canadian tenor Jon Vickers, in a concert performance of Wagner's *Parsifal*.

Mr. Armenian's work has received countless honors including the Canadian Grand Prix du Disque for *Serenades*, one of twenty-eight CD's he has recorded, and an Emmy Award Nomination (New York) for the TV Performance of Menotti's *The Medium* starring Maureen Forrester. Woody Allen used his CD *Music from Berlin in the 1920s* as background music for his film *Shadows and Fog*. In 1985 he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada), in 1989 he was honored with membership the Order of Canada, and in 1991 he received an Honorary Doctorate from Wilfrid Laurier University.

Mr. Armenian has long been active as a pedagogue. In 1982 he became a professor of the Orchestral Conducting Class at the Conservatoire de Musique (Montreal), a position he continues to hold. In 1997, he accepted a two-year post as Visiting Guest Professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, in Graz Austria, and in September 1999 Maestro Armenian became Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto.

The 1999-2000 season marked a return to regular operatic conducting, beginning with his debut at Fresno International Grand Opera, for whom he conducted *Il Trovatore*. The season also

held guest conducting engagements with Les Violon du Roy (Quebec City), and a return to the podium of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra in May.

The 2000-2001 season began with a concert for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio Music - Toronto in a program featuring the chamber versions of the Great Vocal / Orchestral works of Gustav Mahler, with renowned Canadian soprano Edith Wiens, and he returned to the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra to conduct a program in their October Beethoven Festival. Maestro Armenian returned to the podium of the Fresno International Grand Opera this season for their productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Rigoletto*.

The 2001-2002 season began with performances of *Anoush*, by Arman Tigranyan - an Eastern Armenian folk tradition based opera - in a production at Michigan Opera Theatre (Detroit). Maestro Armenian returned on three separate occasions to guest conduct the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, including a CBC recording of Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne*. The season also held return engagements with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, and Fresno International Grand Opera (*La Traviata*). In June 2002 he was guest conductor of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, and he returned to the podium of the Edmonton Symphony.

Highlights of the 2002-03 season include his debut with the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, several engagements with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and he will conduct the CBC Radio Competition in Calgary, Alberta in the spring.

Adine Mintz is completing her Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting, studying under Maestro Raffi Armenian. She received an Ontario Graduate Scholarship this year. She completed her Bachelor of Music Education at the University of Toronto in 2001.

Her love of conducting began at age 15 while attending the Claude Watson School for the Arts. Encouraged by her teachers, she conducted various choirs and the orchestra, culminating in a first place for Earl Haig Men's Chorus at the Kiwanis Music Festival.

As an undergraduate, she sang in the Concert Choir and MacMillan Singers. She conducted both ensembles in rehearsals, as well as working with the Elmer Iseler Singers during Choral Conducting classes. She made her operatic singing debut as "le pouff" in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*.

Adine had three other major projects this season. In November, 2002 Adine made her operatic conducting debut with the U of T Opera Division. She conducted a shortened version of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Since January 2001, Adine has been the conductor of the St. Clement Community Orchestra. For her first

conducting recital, Adine conducted Berlioz' *Roman Carnival Overture* with the U of T Symphony Orchestra in February 2003.

Adine would like to thank everyone who helped make this performance of *Tehillim* a resounding success; Raffi Armenian for believing in her, Russell Hartenberger for all his encouragement and connections, Lorna MacDonald for supervising the singers, Nick Akers and Dennis Patrick for the technical support, all the musicians in the ensemble for selling her their souls for the month of February, her parents for helping her through each new crisis, and Steve Reich for composing an impossible piece that was truly an experience to conduct.

Adine would like to dedicate this performance to the memory of both her grandmothers.

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Martha Sprigge,
Concertmaster
Emese Hegedus
Teresa Oh
Sho Tanaka

Violin II

Tanya Charles
Amy Chen
David Federman

Viola

Christina Loucks
Conrad Rygier

Cello

John Koo
Elena Jubinville

Bass

Christopher Molina

≡ REICH ≡

Percussion

Richard Burrows
Jamie Drake
Devon Fornelli
Peter Jones
Christa Mercey
Antti Ohenoja

Singers

Amy Dodington
Kristin Mueller
Sarah Ormerod
Michelle Simmons

Winds

Chloe L'Abbe, *piccolo*
Amy Lin, *flute*
Shawn Heffel, *oboe*
Grace Nakamura, *English Horn*
Robert Spady, *clarinet 1*
Kim Parsons, *clarinet 2*

Strings

Kerry DuWors, *violin I*
Elizabeth Loewen, *violin II*
Alexander McLeod, *viola*
Rafael Kuerti, *cello*
Matt Goulet, *bass*

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2002-2003

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Raffi Armenian, conductor

Saturday, April 12, 2003
8 pm. MacMillan Theatre

Wagner: Prelude to Act I from *Lohengrin*

Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

Frank Martin: Concerto for Seven Winds (*Nora Shulman, flute;*
Richard Dorsey, oboe; Max Christie, clarinet; Michael Sweeney,
bassoon; Marcus Hennigar, horn; Barton Woomert, trumpet; Gordon
Sweeney, trombone)

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Kenneth Peacock was a distinguished alumnus of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music. His body of work, as a composer and researcher for half a century, has made a significant impact on musical life in Canada. The Faculty of Music was very grateful to learn that Mr. Peacock had made a bequest to the University of Toronto in his will for the benefit of our music programs. With this legacy gift, the Faculty of Music will establish the Kenneth H. Peacock Lecture Series in Music in keeping with his lifelong interest in and contribution to the multi-dimensional study of music. Thank you Mr. Peacock.

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